GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:137
ANSWERED ON:24.02.2016
Deportation of Indians
Boianapalli Shri Vinod Kumar;Chinnayan Shri S.Selvakumara;Kharge Shri Mallikarjun ;Kothapalli Smt. Geetha;Rai Shri Nityanand;Reddy,Kotha Prabhakar;Sathyabama Smt. V.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

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(a) whether a number of Indian students, tourists, etc. with valid visas who arrived in the US were deported from the airport itself;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether the said issue was taken up with the US authorities and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there has also been a steep increase in the visa fees for H1B and L1 visas recently and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to protect the interests of these Indians particularly students?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (e) Recently, there were several instances of denial of entry by the US Immigration authorities to Indian nationals, particularly students, holding valid visas. According to the US Government, these persons had presented information to the border patrol agent which was inconsistent with their visa status.
MEA issued two advisories on December 23, 2015 and December 30, 2015 in this regard. Through these advisories, the Government advised the students seeking admission in the US educational institutions to do due diligence to ensure that the institutions to which they were seeking admission had proper authorization and capacities. The students were also advised to carry all required documentation. Government of India was also in contact with the concerned State Governments on the issue.

Government of India strongly took up the matter with the US Government. Government emphasized the need for the US authorities to honour the visas issued by their own Embassy/Consulates. Government has closely engaged with the US Government with the aim of ensuring that no bonafide students or other travellers were denied entry.

Separately, on December 18, 2015, the US Government signed into law the 2016 Omnibus Spending Bill which included doubling of the H-1B and L-1 visa fees for 50: 50 companies (companies employing 50 or more employees in the United States and 50 percent of which are on non-immigrant visas i.e., H-1B and L-1 visas). With this legislation in place, these companies would now need to pay an enhanced fee of $4,500 for each L-1 visa and $4000 for each H-1B visa, as compared to $2,250 and $2000, respectively paid earlier (till end September 2015). The increase in visa fee would be for a period of 10 years and would also apply to visa extensions.

Government of India has raised its concerns strongly with the US interlocutors at various levels regarding the doubling of the L-1 and H-1B visa fees for 50: 50 companies. Prime Minister also raised this issue with the US President Barack Obama. Government of India has conveyed to the US Government that this provision is discriminatory as it basically targets Indian IT companies.